

EXT. RIVER - KEELBOAT, DUSK

MIKE FINK, 6'3, 180 pounds, wears a bright red flannel shirt, a baggy blue coat and brown trousers with a cap of untanned skin on his head. There is a red feather in his cap. He swaggers about, bragging to camera:

MIKE FINK

I'm a Salt River Roarer! Im a ring-tailed squealer! I'm a reg'lar screamer from the ol' Massassip'! WHOOP! I'm the very infant that refused his milk before its eyes were open, and called out for a bottle of old Rye! I love the women an' I'm chockful o' fight! I'm half wild horse and half cockeyed-alligator and the rest o' me is crooked snags an' red hot snappin' turtle. I can hit like fourth-proof lightnin' an' every lick I make in the woods lets in an acre o' sunshine. I can out-run, out-jump, out-shoot, out-brag, out-drink, an' out fight, rough-an'-tumble, no holts barred, any man on both sides the river from Pittsburg to New Orleans an' back again to St. Louiee. Come on, you flatters, you bargers, you milk- white mechanics, an' see how tough I am to chaw! I ain't had a fight for two days an' I'm spilein' for exercise. Cock-a-doodle-doo!

A crew of KEELBOATMEN, a PASSENGER in a dark coat over buckskin and Fink's woman AMY listen to Fink as they float down the Mississippi river on Fink's keelboat. A few of the men work the boat while the others are captivated by Fink's crowing. There's a modest load of timber in the hold. The boat has a faint wake, making the reflected moonlight ripple gently.

Who you gonna fight, Mr. Fink?

Fink looks at the lad and shrugs him up.

Anybody big enough to take me on, young man?

Amy takes a drink from a whisky bottle.

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